EPA's PFOA REDUCTION EFFORTS

ISSUE/TOPIC:

- Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) is an environmentally persistent chemical that has been used widely in consumer and industrial products, and may be found in cleaners, textiles, leather, paper, paints, and fire-fighting foams.
- Perfluorinated chemicals, including PFOA, are found world-wide in the environment, wildlife, and humans. These chemicals are persistent in the environment, bioaccumulative in wildlife and humans, and are toxic to laboratory animals and wildlife, producing reproductive, developmental, and systemic effects in laboratory tests. There is substantial concern about the effects of such chemicals on public health.
- For two decades, the EPA has worked with industry to reduce human and environmental exposure to PFOA. Biomonitoring data from NHANES surveys show a marked decline in measured PFOA blood levels, from a geometric mean of 5.21 ug/L in the 1999-2000 survey to 1.94 ug/L in 2013-2014.
- In 2006, EPA invited eight major companies responsible for the majority of commercial PFOA to join in a global 2010/2015 PFOA Stewardship Program with the goal of reducing facility emissions of PFOA and chemicals that degrade to PFOA by 95% by the year 2010. This goal also applied to product content levels. Participants committed to working toward the elimination of these chemicals in their products by 2015. All eight companies participating in the PFOA Stewardship Program met their commitments.
- Nevertheless, there are still companies making and using PFOA.

BACKGROUND:

- In late 1999, the EPA received data and began an investigation into concerns that (perfluorooctane sulfonate) PFOS was being found in human blood and the environment worldwide. Following discussions between the EPA and 3M, the manufacturer of PFOS, the company terminated production in 2002.
- EPA followed with a wide range of voluntary and regulatory actions to better understand the potential risks of exposure to PFOS, PFOA, and other perfluorinated chemicals.
- EPA also has taken a number of regulatory actions under TSCA to limit any future manufacture or import of certain perfluorinated chemicals. Since 2000, EPA has published Significant New Use Rules (SNURs) impacting several hundred chemicals in these classes.
- In January 2015, EPA proposed to require manufacturers (including importers) and processors of PFOA and related chemicals who do not have ongoing uses of PFOA to notify EPA at least 90 days before starting or resuming new uses of these chemicals in any products.
- In May 2016, EPA established non-regulatory health advisories for PFOA and PFOS in drinking water based on the agency's assessment of the latest peer-reviewed science.

TALKING POINTS:

- EPA's PFOA reduction efforts have been successful. While import and use of PFOA continues, measured blood levels declined by more than 60% since 2000 and the agency has consistently exceeded its GPRA annual performance targets for PFOA reduction.
- EPA is taking further steps to protect public health by ensuring the safety of pre-market alternatives to PFOA and PFOS through its New Chemical Review Program.
- EPA remains concerned about ongoing uses of PFOA and related chemicals that are still available in existing stocks or are being newly introduced by companies not participating in the PFOA Stewardship Program.